

FRANK LUNTZ'S IDEAL SMALL BUSINESSPERSON: DEMOCRATIC CONGRESSMAN MARK SCHAUER



You know that Frank Luntz memo telling
Republicans how to kill Wall Street reform?

Republican message guru Frank Luntz has put together a playbook to help derail financial regulatory reform.

In a 17-page memo titled, "The Language of Financial Reform," Luntz urged opponents of reform to frame the final product as filled with bank bailouts, lobbyist loopholes, and additional layers of complicated government bureaucracy.

"If there is one thing we can all agree on, it's that the bad decisions and harmful policies by Washington bureaucrats that in many ways led to the economic crash must never be repeated," Luntz wrote. "This is your critical advantage. Washington's incompetence is the common ground on which you can build support."

Well, as Ben Smith points out, Luntz used a funny picture to illustrate his section on how best to reach out to small businesspeople.

Pollster Frank Luntz picked an unusual poster boy in his new memo instructing Republicans to kill attempts to tighten financial regulations by tying the new laws to the bailout: Michigan Democratic

Congressman Mark Schauer.

Schauer and his wife, Christine, are used to illustrate a section suggesting Republicans “personalize the impact” of the legislation by claiming it will effect specific small business owners.

In his research, “”The most popular images of small business owners both projected optimism with signs saying ‘grand opening’ or ‘open.’”

The image above, which appears on page 14 of the memo, appears to be taken from Scheuer’s campaign website, which celebrated the opening of his wife’s store in a July, 2008 posting headed, “Mark Schauer: Small Business Owner.” The Battle Creek, Mich. shop, according to the item, is a kind of upscale consignment store.

Mark, of course, is the Congressman from just west of Ann Arbor. He is speaking like a proud progressive in one of the most closely contested districts this year. And, as Ben points out, Mark voted for Wall Street reform but opposed the bailout (he was first elected in 2008 so was not in Congress at the time).

I guess not only are Democrats better for the economy. But even astute political observer Frank Luntz recognizes that Democrats make the ideal businesspeople too.

Update: Mark Schauer’s office issued the following in response to Luntz’s gaffe:

To be clear, Frank Luntz is a paid consultant for Wall Street banks and big credit card companies, and this memo was written with one goal in mind – defeating a bill to end taxpayer-funded bailouts and clean up the mess on Wall Street.

As a small business owner himself, Mark understands the economic challenges

entrepreneurs in Michigan are facing. That's why he plans to support a new tax credit for businesses that hire more workers, and a measure that will make it easier for small businesses to obtain credit and expand their operations by taxing excessive bonuses at bailed out Wall Street banks.